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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,
B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMEN
USAID/ANE/MEA
LONDON FOR TSOU
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON MIDDLE EAST

Editorial Commentary

-- "American Immunity"

Lawyer and human rights activist Hani Dahleh writes on the op-ed page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (07/12): "The United States of America knew that its soldiers were going to commit many crimes in any country they occupy.... Thus, the United States carried out a global campaign and exerted incredible pressures on countries and was able to reach bilateral agreements that provide immunity to its officials and soldiers from getting sued or tried for any crime they commit in the occupied country or other countries.... We saw the American soldiers, who committed heinous crimes in Abu Ghraib prison and killed civilians and children, raped women, destroyed houses and burned bodies of victims in Iraqi cities, go unpunished and their crimes were not even investigated. When the crime of the rape and killing of Abeer and three of her family members was exposed, there was a media and popular uproar there in Iraq. The Iraqi prime minister called for reconsidering the agreement that gives immunity to the American soldiers for the crimes they commit in Iraq.... Of course, the prime minister's call is going to go unnoticed and will have no effect, because the United States is not going to backtrack from the immunity agreement and will not accept to have it amended or cancelled. Countries that are bound by this agreement can either nullify it unilaterally ... or not allow any American soldier to stay in the land. Otherwise, we will continue to hear about new crimes that go unpunished."

-- "The crimes of America and Israel"

Chief Editor Taher Odwan writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (07/12): "The crimes of Israel and America in Palestine and Iraq have become above accountability and above international law, despite the fact that they are crimes equal to mass extermination of people, stones and trees. In Al-Mahmoudiyeh in Iraq, five American soldiers took turns raping a minor girl in her own home and in front of her parents, then killed her and her family. On the shores of Gaza, the family of the child Huda Ghalia was exterminated and this was witnessed by the entire world. Meanwhile, Olmert insists on continuing to shed Palestinian blood, and there is no change in the stance of the Bush administration vis-`-vis the crimes of his army.... Crime committing in Palestine and Iraq continues, revealing a moral and human collapse and deterioration, as well as political and military failure. They, the Americans and the Israelis, are besieging themselves in a growing sea of hatred and detestation."

